UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/47/PV.25
15 October 1992

ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 5 October 1992, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. AL-HADDAD (Vice-President)	(Yemen)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Al-Bishari (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
Mr. Alleyne (Dominica)
Mr. Adoum (Chad)
Mr. Mesfin (Ethiopia)
Mr. Abdurazzakov (Uzbekistan)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

92-61322 1635V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. AL-BISHARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure at the outset to join the speakers who preceded me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. My delegation is confident that your wide experience and diplomatic skill will contribute to the success of the session.

I should like also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi, for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

I am pleased also to convey our appreciation and praise to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for this consistent efforts, in the face of numerous impediments, to strengthen the role of the Organization in achieving the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as for his Agenda for Peace proposals aimed at enhancing the role of the United Nations in preserving international peace and security, ensuring justice and protecting human rights.

I should like too to welcome the new Members of the Organization: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Slovenia, Moldova, San Marino, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Georgia. Their accession to the Organization's membership is a further step towards the complete universality of our Organization. It also enhances international acceptability of the principles and purposes of this great Organization and boosts its efforts to achieve justice, prosperity, progress and international peace and security.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Since the last session, international relations and the international balance of power have undergone profound changes and transformations. Those changes have resulted in, among other things, the collapse and disintegration of what was known as the Soviet Union, and the end of bipolarity. The world has begun to seek the establishment of an alternative order whose features have not crystallized. In the meantime, there are signs that several of the cold-war problems - such as certain regional conflicts, the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa and the slowing down of the arms race -- may be amenable to solution. These developments in international relations have created new opportunities and new challenges. The challenges must be confronted by the international community with all seriousness and determination. This should be done by strengthening the spirit of understanding and reconciliation that now prevails in international relations.

However, this optimism should not stop us from conceding that certain old questions and problems have not been resolved yet. Furthermore, those developments have created new hotbeds of tension in certain areas of the world, as evidenced by the eruption of the ethnic conflicts and civil wars that have cast their shadows on the international arena. Such unwelcome trends make it incumbent upon the international community to do more to strengthen the positive trends in international relations so that we may resolve the residual and the new problems alike.

Within that context, my country supports the efforts of the States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reach a speedy solution to the Liberian problem.

We also urge the international community to encourage the Afghans to settle their differences in a manner that would spare them new confrontation.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

And we call on the international community to work seriously to end the bloody conflict in the Balkans by encouraging the republics of the former Yugoslavia to settle their disputes through dialogue and negotiation instead of force and violence.

The international community should redouble its efforts to put an end to the human tragedy of the Somali people and to take appropriate measures to reach a rational reconciliation, thereby guaranteeing a dignified life for the Somalis, who are facing a massive famine.

As for the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates, over the islands of Abu Mousa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb, we would like to state the need to adhere to the international norms and conventions that prohibit the occupation by force of the territory of another State. We call upon our brethren in Iran and the United Arab Emirates to allow reason, respect for good-neighbourliness, and the principle of sovereignty to prevail, and to search for a peaceful solution to this conflict, thereby sparing the region an escalation in tensions.

The just cause of the Palestinian people has been with the United Nations since its inception. Notwithstanding the adoption of numerous resolutions by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other organs, the Organization remains unable to implement its own resolutions. As the Secretary-General states in his report to the Security Council on preventive diplomacy,

> "The principles of the Charter should be applied consistently, not selectively, for if the perception should be of the latter, trust will wane and with it the moral authority which is the greatest and most unique quality of that instrument." (A/47/277, para. 82)

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Due to clear discrimination against the Palestinian people - who remain under the yoke of Israeli occupation and suffer all forms of oppression, repression, enslavement and injustice caused by an international community which employs double standards - that people rose up in an intifadah against Israeli occupation, insisting, properly, on their right to self-determination and demonstrating that the will of peoples cannot be crushed by repression.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

We should like to reaffirm from this rostrum our support for the intifadah of the Palestinian people against injustice and for that people's right to liberate their land, to exercise self-determination and to establish their own independent and sovereign State. We urge the international community to translate its support of the Palestinian people into practical measures by pressing for the immediate halting of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, the complete halting of the building of Israeli settlements, the protection of the Palestinian people and the implementation of all resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question and to the occupied Arab territories, so that peace and justice may prevail in all parts of the Middle East.

Despite all the encouraging developments in South Africa over the past two years, recent events have shown that the situation there is still a source of tension and cause for concern. The recent eruption and escalation of violence is an ominous sign of a possible explosion that may jeopardize the process designed to abolish apartheid through negotiation. While welcoming the steps recently taken by the international community in this respect, my country will continue its support of the South African people's struggle to eradicate the system of apartheid, which, it seems, is unwilling to desist from its racist practices voluntarily and, chameleon-like, is desperately trying to disguise itself. Therefore, all of us must maintain the pressure on that regime to make it heed the will of the majority, the will of the international community and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The remarkable changes and developments in today's world impose new responsibilities on the United Nations in performing its role as an instrument

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

of preserving world peace and security and promoting stability, reconciliation, development and prosperity for all. Small and vulnerable countries have taken heart from the Organization's increased capabilities, especially now that the Organization has achieved marked success in the settlement of disputes in Cambodia and Afghanistan, in the realization of Namibia's independence and in supporting the legitimate struggle of the people of South Africa to dismantle apartheid.

Notwithstanding those positive indications in the Organization's work, it has been noted that some still continue to dominate the Organization and to use it, under various pretexts, to serve their own political purposes through the law of force rather than the force of the law, and by pursuing policies of political and military intervention as well as economic pressure. The pressures to which Libya has been subjected are part and parcel of those policies. The same is true of what has been visited upon the Iraqi people. Thus, we call for an end to the embargo imposed against the people of Iraq, for an end to their starvation, for respecting their sovereignty and for non-interference in their internal affairs.

What has become known as the Lockerbie Case is one of the by-products of the present international situation and illustrates its effect on small countries that pursue independent policies and take independent positions. The case also shows the need to introduce basic changes in the mechanism by which resolutions are adopted in the United Nations, and especially in the Security Council, so as to make them more expressive of the will of the international community. The case also pinpoints the dangers inherent in the tendency of certain States to use the powers of the Security Council to

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

achieve their own private objectives and to use double standards in dealing with issues before the Council in a manner that deals high-handedly and arbitrarily with the sovereignty and rights of small and vulnerable countries.

The Lockerbie Case was raised and forced upon the Security Council and dealt with under Chapter VII of the Charter, which does not apply, since Libya neither threatened world peace nor threatened or committed aggression against another country, actions it would have to have taken to be liable under the provisions of Chapter VII, which relates to the maintenance of international peace and security. Conscious of that, and based on its abhorrence of terrorism, of which it is a victim, my country expressed, in good will, its sincere willingness to cooperate in uncovering the facts and circumstances relating to the case. Upon being notified of the matter, my country took all required legal measures consistent with international law and conventions that do not violate Libya's sovereign rights. Regrettably, however, the interested parties refused to cooperate with the Libyan legal authorities, which had offered to conduct joint investigations of the two Libyan suspects. When the States concerned referred the matter to the Security Council, which adopted resolution 731 (1992) calling upon Libya to cooperate, my country, in letters to the United Nations Secretary-General, expressed its acceptance of the resolution and proposed a series of initiatives to implement it. Throughout, my country has been motivated by a desire to reach a settlement that would guarantee the rights of all parties and spare the region the dangers of

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

tension and instability. However, the Libyan initiatives concerning the implementation of the provisions of the resolution met the same fate as earlier ones, for the countries concerned rushed to the Security Council to seek adoption of another resolution imposing unjust sanctions against the small, peaceful Libyan people, without any legal basis or moral justification. That action completely ignored my country's declared commitment to effective cooperation in the implementation of Security Council resolution 731 (1992), as set out clearly in document S/23917 of 14 May 1992. The commitment was welcomed by the great majority of the family of nations as represented in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, all of which expressed solidarity with the fair Libyan position from the very start of the crisis. In all of their decisions and final statements issued in September 1992 those organizations were unanimous on the following points.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

First, praised Libya's cooperation in seeking a peaceful settlement of the crisis within the context of Libya's national sovereignty, international law, and the principles of the United Nations Charter that govern relations between independent States.

Secondly, called on the parties concerned to respond positively to Libya's initiatives calling for dialogue, negotiation, and non-escalation, in order to reach a solution to the crisis under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations and under the auspices of the Secretary-General, in a manner that would be conducive to ending the crisis and its repercussions peacefully, fairly and quickly.

Thirdly, called upon the Security Council to lift the measures imposed on Libya, which has expressed its commitment to resolution 731 (1992)

As part of its initiatives, Libya has recently called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to send an international committee to verify that Libya has met all the requirements of Security Council resolution 731 (1992) related to terrorism. Once again, the parties concerned prevented the Secretary-General from responding to this proposal, and - at a time when my country had expected the Council to lift or reduce the unjust sanctions in the light of Libya's positive response to the requirements of resolution 731 (1992) concerning terrorism, which we unequivocally condemn, and its complete willingness to provide a fair and unbiased trial for the suspects, which has been agreed to - sought to persuade the Security Council to adopt a new resolution extending the sanctions for four more months. My country still calls for a peaceful settlement to this situation, a settlement that will

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

safeguard the rights of all, maintain the principles of international law, and save the world from escalation and confrontation.

The unjust sanctions against my country have caused a grea deal of human and material harm, loss and suffering to the Libyan people. My country has already detailed those losses and damages in official circulating documents of the Security Council. The embargo has affected numerous sectors, especially in the fields of health and social services. One example of this is the fact that the delay in the arrival of medical supplies and instruments has led to the deaths of a large number of children, and pregnant women who died in labour. It was also impossible to send abroad over 3,000 medical cases that can not be treated locally, including cases of heart disease, kidney transplants, bone-marrow transplants, neurosurgery, and burns. One hundred and fifty gravely ill patients, who could not be treated locally, died while being transported overland to airports in Tunisia and Egypt. In addition, the overuse of land routes to and from the Jamahiriya resulted in an increase in road accidents during the last four months of this year compared to the same period in 1991. The number of accidents rose from 2,401 in 1991 to 3,788 over the past four months. Deaths from these accidents rose from 389 to 528, an increase of about 35 per cent.

As for economic losses resulting from the air embargo, they have amounted to $2,157 million as a result of the fall in revenues generated by exports of fruits and vegetables, in addition to a 44 per cent drop in non-oil exports. The sanctions also resulted in the interruption of many industrial activities due to the shortage in means of production and spare parts, not to mention agriculture. The losses in animal and agricultural production, for example,

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

are estimated at $1,062,803,000.00 as a result of the non-arrival of medicines and sera necessary for protecting the livestock sector against animal epidemics and communicable diseases.

Those who prompted the Security Council to impose these sanctions on our small, peaceful population - which has limited resources and has threatened no one - bear the political, legal, and moral responsibility for the deaths of women, children, the aged, the handicapped, and the sick. They also bear responsibility for the decline in the standard of living, the slow pace of development, the spread of epidemics, and the imprisonment of an entire people inside its own borders. There is no doubt that all of this relates directly to human rights. History will bear witness to what is being perpetrated in the name of the Security Council against a small, peaceful population.

Thus, my country would like from this rostrum to call upon the international Organization and the international Security Council, out of respect for the principles of justice, to lift these sanctions, which have harmed the Libyan people and the peoples of neighboring States. It also invites the concerned parties to engage in dialogue and to cooperate in order to reach a solution to this dispute based on sovereignty and mutual respect in accordance with international norms and laws.

I must put before this international forum some facts that are no doubt universally accepted. The first fact is that all countries, large and small, must respect the Charter of the United Nations and uphold international law if the world is not to slip into a state of anarchy, which is in no one's interest. The objective of the United Nations should be the protection of the sovereignty of States and respect for their laws. The second fact is that the

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Security Council, the authority entrusted with maintaining international peace and security, should not become a tool used by some world Powers as a cover for their hegemonistic designs. The third fact is the need for an international judicial organ entrusted with trying those who commit acts of terrorism of any sort or source. Hence, we welcome the call for the establishment of an international criminal court to look into international criminal cases.

The consolidation of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region is high on the agenda of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for we believe that security and peace in that region is vital, not only to the coastal States, but also to the peace and security of the world. Thus, my country remains convinced that effective security in the region can be achieved only after the causes of tension that beset the Mediterranean are removed and after the foreign navies and military bases are withdrawn from it. Moreover, cooperation among its coastal States should be increased, coordinated and intensified. That is why my country would like to underscore the findings in the final declaration of the Tenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement Countries, which called for supporting the efforts aimed at transforming the Mediterranean into a zone of peace, security and cooperation on the basis of the principles of respect for the equality and sovereignty of States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of others, and the non-use or threat of force.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

My country has consistently affirmed that it supports disarmament because it is aware of the terrible dangers that armaments pose to our planet. In this context, Libya submitted to the Assembly a proposal calling on the United Nations General Assembly to look into the serious phenomena of concern to all nations, such as international terrorism - how to deal with its causes and how to eradicate it; weapons of mass destruction, and offensive strategic weapons, which constitute a terrifying danger for all, including those who own them. The proposal refers also to offering compensation to the peoples who were colonized and subjected to repression and suppression by their colonizers. Our proposal deals also with other important issues, such as the question of refugees, exiles and the kidnapped, in addition to reviewing the Charter of the United Nations. It proposes studying various economic and social problems and the ills that afflict humanity with a view to finding a solution for all these problems and to realizing stability, prosperity and happiness for the whole world.

In addition to this, it is important to solve certain political questions which have been with the United Nations since its inception. All those questions are contained in document A/46/840 of 9 January 1992.

Once again, my country renews its call for disarmament through the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction of all countries which possess, produce or stockpile them, without exception or discrimination. My country, as party to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and to the Treaty on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons and the Geneva Protocol, supports all efforts aimed at curbing the arms race and at eliminating nuclear weapons. That is why we welcome the recent agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation further to reduce their nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

My country also welcomes France's accession to the non-proliferation Treaty. To further expand this tendency, my country supports the establishment of zones that are free of all nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, including Africa and the Middle East. It also supports the proposal of the Arab Republic of Egypt which calls for declaring the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction. This objective, however, is obstructed by persistent difficulties resulting from Israel's continued production, possession and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction as well as its testing of these weapons and its refusal to heed repeated international appeals to submit its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In this present era of change one concrete fact emerges, namely that the international community has not shown the same concern over questions of economic development as it did in regard to other questions such as those of political crises. Economic problems, which are a significant factor in the obstruction of development and growth, are still with us. This does not seem logical, especially at a time when the world looks forward to a new era of security and stability. If this new era is to materialize, appropriate measures should be taken to solve the intractable economic problems of the developing countries in particular. These include the problems arising from protectionism, lack of transfer of technology, reverse flows of resources, external debts and low commodity prices. Furthermore, the imposition of arbitrary measures and sanctions, such as economic embargoes, trade restrictions and the freezing of funds and assets by certain developed countries against a number of developing countries, must be halted. In

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

addition, it is very important for the international community to honour its commitments vis-à-vis certain programmes, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Africa expects a great deal from this programme which is supposed to bolster development efforts started on the continent at the regional level by establishing the African economic community, and at the subregional level in the form of groupings such as the Arab Maghreb Union, to which my country is honoured to belong. This union aims at intensifying cooperation among its member countries and with the rest of the continent. It also seeks to enter into wider cooperation with other countries of the world, especially the European Mediterranean countries, and to enhance cooperation between the countries of the South and the North.

The results of the Summit on environment and development which was held in the middle of this year are a great achievement that bespeaks the international community's determination to protect the world's natural resources. The commitment of the world to preserve the environment was evident in the agreements on climatic change and biological diversity that were reached at that Conference. The important thing now is to cooperate internationally and effectively in implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the Earth Summit. In this respect, my country welcomes the decision of the Summit concerning the setting up of a standing developmental committee and hopes that this committee will become a forum for implementing the decisions of Agenda 21 which are aimed at preserving the environment while pursuing development.

Conservation of the environment requires both international cooperation and national efforts. My country participated in the Rio de Janeiro Conference and signed its conventions and agreements. At the national level

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

my country accords top priority to questions of development. Accordingly, my country has begun to combat drought and desertification through the great man-made river project which will carry millions of cubic metres of water from the southern part of Libya to the arable land in the coastal area where the greatest part of our population lives. Our national plans aim at the reclamation of thousands of hectares of land for both agriculture and human settlement. Despite all this, my country still suffers from a severe shortage of water which is necessary for its economic development plans. This shortage not only threatens my country, but will imperil the continuation of life in North Africa and the Middle East unless it is dealt with through international cooperation.

I must state here that our aspirations after development face certain difficulties which my country has raised in several regional and international forums, including the General Assembly. The Secretary-General himself spoke about those difficulties in his report, An Agenda for Peace. I am here referring to mines and the remnants of war. During the Second World War, Libyan territory was used as one of the main theatres for military operations. Our people have paid an exorbitant material and human price for a war in which our country had no stake. Since the end of that war, the Libyan people have continued to suffer from the remnants of the war and the mines and explosives planted by the warring armies in its territory.

Many regional and international organizations, including the General Assembly, have adopted resolutions calling upon the countries responsible to submit the required information and technical assistance needed for the removal of those mines and remnants, and to pay compensation for the damage caused by them.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Today, we reiterate our call to those countries to act in a responsible manner, to respond positively to the appeals of the international community and to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolutions relating to the remnants of war.

The environment in my country is also threatened by the harmful effects of pollution in the Mediterranean, caused by the wastes poured into its water by foreign navies stationed in the area, the over-consumption and over-production of the developed Mediterranean countries and the dumping of hundreds of tons of pesticides and combustibles in its waters. This has caused an environmental imbalance that is being further aggravated by the exploitation of the Mediterranean by countries from outside the region.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Human rights issues are the focus of the international community's attention and are at the top of its scale of priorities. While appreciating the role of the United Nations in ensuring the exercise of human rights and basic freedoms, we must state that those rights are not scrupulously respected in a number of regions. In addition, the double standards and the selectivity that mar the conduct of certain countries in the area of protecting human rights have prevented the United Nations, and especially the Commission on Human Rights, from effectively performing their role in this area. We hope that the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in Vienna in mid-1993, will afford us opportunities to deliberate on all these questions and will adopt practical measures to deal with them and identify the ways and means whereby human rights may be protected and defended against violations.*

My country attaches great importance to human rights and to the dignity and welfare of man. This was reaffirmed in the great green document on human rights, which includes numerous basic principles for the promotion of human rights. This has been crowned by effective and legal procedures, such as the law on enhancing freedoms, which was promulgated in 1991, the establishment of a national human rights commission and an international committee for the Qaddafi human rights award. Furthermore, Libya has acceded to most international agreements and instruments relating to human rights and measures are being taken to meet our commitments arising from accession to these agreements and instruments.

---

* Mr. Al-Haddad (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

One of the items on the international agenda is the setting up of a new world order. There is no doubt that such a world order will not function properly and effectively unless we overcome and rectify certain shortcomings of the United Nations, since the Organization will be the world body that will play a fundamental role in the management and coordination of that new world order. Thus, the most urgent task now is to reinvigorate the United Nations, restructure and democratize it. My country welcomes the efforts being made at present to reform the Organization and enhance its effectiveness, including the encouraging initiatives of the Secretary-General.

However, a great deal remains to be done in this respect, such as ensuring full respect for the Charter, and consistent adherence to its provisions, without selectivity and without any breach of its principles. We must also ensure that the Organization is not dominated by any one and that its resolutions are respected and implemented non-selectively. Furthermore, the role of the General Assembly should be strengthened in a manner that would ensure the effective and full implementation of all its resolutions, as those resolutions are the true expression of the sum-total of the positions of all the Member States. Also, the current composition of the Security Council should be reviewed and expanded in order for it to reflect the increase in membership of the United Nations. It is also highly important to review some of the provisions of the Charter. We would like specifically to focus attention on the veto right in the Security Council. My country was the first to call for the abolition of that privilege, because it is one of the main impediments to the most important role for which the United Nations was established, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. We

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

have lately felt satisfaction at the expansion of this call. Many countries, including some current members of the Security Council, have voiced similar views, and have come to share our conviction that a system of collective security that continues to be subject to a veto by some countries can never be depended on to maintain peace and security.

In a few years time, we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Over the past four decades, the Organization has performed a remarkable role in decolonization and has worked tirelessly for the consolidation of international peace and security. It has taken many initiatives towards the achievement of economic development and social well-being. Hence, my country's welcome for the call to convene an International Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and an International Conference on Population in 1994, as both conferences will afford an opportunity for the re-assessment of international programmes of assistance to developing countries, with a view to achieving an optimum balance between population growth and development resources.

My country welcomes also the call for convening an International Conference on Women in 1995, and attaches great importance to the World Summit for Social Development, because it will give political impetus to national, regional and international efforts and activities aimed at meeting the social needs of many developing countries.

As all those world conferences will take place under circumstances of international change and transformation, my country looks forward to their results and hopes that they will lead to the laying of solid foundations and the forumlation of clear-cut approaches that would lead to international

(Mr. Al-Bishari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

efforts aimed at the strengthening of peace, security and stability for all as well as the creation of opportunities for the progress of all mankind.

In these critical times and in the context of this unstable international situation, the small countries of the world look towards the United Nations with all their hopes for a brave new world of peace, security, justice and equality for all that would be built by the hands of all nations alike, large and small, wealthy and poor; a brave world in which the values of freedom, democracy and human rights are upheld and which will be free of violence, injustice and dictatorship; a world of love and brotherhood, where God's light shines above the whole Earth - the one God, who is Lord of the universe. We sincerely hope that the United Nations will rise to the great challenges that face it. The President of the Assembly can count on my country's cooperation in every endeavour that will promote, enhance and realize these principles and objectives I have spoken of. With peace and love from the small, peaceful Libyan people to all your peace-loving peoples.

Mr. ALLEYNE (Dominica): I am honoured to congratulate Mr. Ganev and his country, Bulgaria, on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. We are aware that he possesses the qualities and experience required for assuming the responsibility of presiding over the Assembly, and we are therefore confident that he will serve in that capacity with authority, dignity and honour. I assure him of the full cooperation of the delegation of the Commonwealth of Dominica in the discharge of his duties.

It is with great pleasure also that I congratulate and welcome Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali on his election as the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

Mr. Boutros-Ghali's election is a contribution by Egypt, Africa and the third world in general to the maintenance of world peace, justice and fundamental human rights. His intellect, integrity, sense of commitment and wide experience in international affairs are qualities which, I have no doubt, will ensure excellence in the performance of his duties. I assure Mr. Boutros-Ghali of the strong support of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica throughout his term as Secretary-General.

Permit me to formally bid farewell to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, who gave 10 remarkable years of service to this international body. He will be well remembered for his keen interest in the welfare of humankind and more specifically for his efforts at maintaining world peace. It is my firm belief that his successor will pursue the issues that Mr. Perez de Cuellar hopes will be the main concern of the United Nations in the coming years: maintenance of international peace and security, justice, universalization of human rights, and lessening of the gap between rich and poor nations of the world community.

We believe the United Nations should be a truly international body, with universal membership. However, we do not accept the practice of automatic succession. We insist that all new States seeking admission must qualify for membership. Countries seeking admission to this world community must be committed to peace and must accept the obligations of the United Nations Charter: countries which, in the judgement of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out their obligations.

It is in this context that we wholeheartedly support the decision to exclude for the time being Serbia and Montenegro from membership of the United

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

Nations, and we welcome other new members from the former Yugoslavia and former Soviet Union. Serbia and Montenegro, on the other hand, by their barbaric acts and flagrant violation of human rights through the practice of "ethnic cleansing", have demonstrated a lack of respect for the obligations and principles of this world body.

The Commonwealth of Dominica joins the world community in condemning Serbia's acts of violence and aggression against the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and calls for concerted and effective action in defence of the defenceless in those States.

While we support unstintingly the resolutions adopted by the Security Council authorizing the use of force to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced persons of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and applaud the efforts of different United Nations agencies in that respect, there is need for greater effort to stop Serbian aggression and end the civil war under way in the former Yugoslav Republic. "Ethnic cleansing" and violations of international humanitarian law must not be tolerated. Our community of nations cannot be indifferent to the slaughtering of innocent people.

Recent trends have demonstrated a weakening, and even a disruption, of the democratic process, as well as widespread violations of human rights not only in Eastern Europe but also in Africa and the Americas.

Civil war coupled with the severity of the drought problem has led to famine and death for too many Somalians, and we exhort the United Nations to spare no effort in alleviating the plight of the starving millions of that country.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica was deeply gratified by the positive outcome of the referendum on reform in South Africa. It seemed

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

to confirm the will of the people of South Africa to move forward rapidly towards an equitable society where all citizens would be offered their God-given dignity and their full right to participate in the affairs of that country. As a sign of support, and in response to the positive vote on the referendum, the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica joined other nations of the Commonwealth in an easing of people-to-people contacts generally.

We are however deeply concerned at the persistence of violence and the failure of the South African Government to control it, which undermines and obstructs progress towards democracy and majority rule. We call for a concerted thrust to bring an end to violence, and for a constructive and open dialogue between the Pretoria regime and the African National Congress in an effort to arrive at an early agreement on majority rule.

The international community must keep the situation under constant review and should ease economic sanctions against the minority regime in South Africa only in response to firm, significant and irreversible progress towards a democratically elected government based on principles of equality and justice. We hope for an end to all violence and look forward to peaceful progress towards a truly just and democratic system.

The situation in Haiti is of particular concern to us in the Americas. The violence and illegal interruption of the democratic process in our sister island has led to continual violations of human rights, increased poverty and suffering of the Haitian people, economic degradation and the fleeing of thousands from their homeland. The subsequent refugee crisis is cause for grave concern.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

The Organization of American States (OAS) has made significant efforts to restore the democratic system in Haiti, but despite resolutions passed by the OAS General Assembly and a number of missions to Haiti, along with other initiatives, the situation has not been resolved. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to support the decision contained in the OAS resolutions on the restoration of democracy in Haiti and to participate in their effective implementation. The leaks that have enabled the illegal government to survive and even consolidate its position in the face of the embargo must be closed off.

In his statement before the United Nations General Assembly in December 1991, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated:

> "If there is no development without democracy, there can also be no democracy without development." (A/46/PV.59, p. 16)

The economic situation in Haiti is an issue that needs to be addressed. Labelled the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, Haiti continues to suffer economic deterioration. The Members of the United Nations cannot turn a blind eye to the urgent and basic development needs of Haiti. Our concerted efforts at restoring democracy must be accompanied by plans for immediate improvements in the social and economic conditions of the people of this Caribbean nation.

Within this context, Dominica issues a warning that the collapse of the banana industry in Dominica and the Windward Islands, which may be the inevitable consequence of imposing a tariff on bananas under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, would immediately and dramatically adversely affect the economic and social conditions of those small island developing

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

States. We would find ourselves dealing, not with one Haiti, but with three or four in the Caribbean. Such an upheaval could very easily be avoided at no appreciable cost to the basic principles of world trade. What we need is continuing flexibility based on a recognition of the already proclaimed special needs of small island developing countries.

Allow me, in the context of the discussion of violations of human rights, to refer to Iraq's flagrant violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 688 (1991), which requires Baghdad to end the repression of its citizens and allow access by international humanitarian organizations. It is the responsibility of Iraq as a Member of the United Nations to comply fully with United Nations Security Council resolutions. Iraq's continued violation of these resolutions and continued repression of its civilian population must be condemned.

One of the fundamental principles of the United Nations is respect for the sovereignty of each Member State. It is with this in mind that we consider intolerable the assumption that one sovereign State can with impunity commit criminal offences in another sovereign State on the pretext of promoting law enforcement. National sovereignty is not of varying value depending on the size or wealth of the nations. The rule of law must be upheld between States as well as within States.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

The quest for the protection of the environment continues to be pursued vigorously, and the efforts of international organizations must be applauded. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio last June, is proof, according to Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, that nations understand the very fragile nature of the Earth and how very important it is to save our planet. The question to be addressed, then, is how to approach the problem of environmental degradation in a manner which will protect the interests of both developing and industrialized countries.

Out of the Earth Summit emerged the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, consisting of a set of principles aimed at governing the economic and environmental behaviour of individuals and nations in the quest for global sustainability. Agenda 21 covers all areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy and deals with the protection of the atmosphere and of the oceans; combating deforestation, desertification and drought; the role of indigenous peoples and women in implementing sustainable development; the meeting of basic human needs; and, very importantly, the transitional patterns of production and consumption in the industrialized countries which would significantly reduce their disproportionate contribution to the deterioration of the Earth's environment.

We must be cognizant of the difficulties to be encountered in our attempts to accomplish some of the goals of Agenda 21.

The industrialized countries have gained economic prosperity in disregard of the resultant destruction of the environment. The developing countries, for their part, are seeking, belatedly, to raise the standard of living of their populations, primarily through a process of industrialization patterned

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

on the model of the developed countries. That quest will no doubt take its toll on the environment.

The responsibility of the industrialized countries to contribute to the progress of the developing countries in a compensatory manner must be recognized. They must compensate for damage to the environment and for injustice to the developing countries.

The sovereign right of a country to use its natural resources for its economic development, while respecting the environment and bearing in mind the needs of future generations, must be recognized. Small countries, no less than large ones, have the right to pursue their national interests free from the bullying threats of special-interest groups.

Finally, I should like to recall that Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, in his induction speech on 3 December 1991, promised to streamline the operations of the United Nations, "eliminating what is wasteful and obsolete (A/46/PV.59, p. 16). If our objective of achieving progress towards world peace is to be realized, we must strengthen, not weaken, the ability of the United Nations to provide technical and material assistance to developing countries "in order to narrow the gap between the rich North and the poor South" (A/46/PV.59, p. 13). It will also help us to achieve the "agenda of justice" which the outgoing Secretary-General, the distinguished diplomat Javier Perez de Cuellar, identified as the dominant concern of the United Nations in the years ahead.

The restructuring of the United Nations is a very urgent need. We are living in a dynamic world where, every day, events make heavy demands on the Organization. The United Nations has had to deal with those demands in a rather ad hoc manner, and if it is to become more responsive to the needs of

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

Member States and to function more effectively within the parameters of the Charter, a comprehensive analysis needs to be undertaken immediately and new machinery put in place to make the tasks of preserving world peace and promoting fundamental human rights achievable.

During the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, there was much discussion on reforming the Organization. Emphasis was placed on streamlining the Secretariat and increasing the authority of the Secretary-General. There is need at this point to do more in-depth study of the plan worked out by the 22 industrialized and developing countries and of the final report prepared by the Nordic United Nations Project. The important thing is that whatever is done must render the Organization more effective in promoting peace and development throughout the world. Anything less would merely perpetuate the waste of limited resources. It must be made clear that the world cannot long continue on its present path.

Mr. ADOUM (Chad) (interpretation from French): In addressing the General Assembly this afternoon from this rostrum, I should like first of all to offer Mr. Ganev my warmest congratulations on his unanimous election as President for the forty-seventh session. His great experience is unquestionably a most valuable assurance for the international community during this tumultuous period in the world, a world which is seeking peace, security and well-being. He can count on the strong support and the full cooperation of the Chadian delegation, which it is my privilege to head.

Ambassador Samir Shihabi, his predecessor, won our admiration with the tact and skill with which he handled the serious questions that arose during the period of his mandate. We express to him our fullest appreciation for his valuable contribution.

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

Less than 10 months after the beginning of his term of office, the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has put his stamp on the Organization and has been called upon to play a role of growing importance in the life of free peoples and nations. We wish him ever-greater successes and offer him our support in the execution of his weighty duties. We have no doubt he will discharge his tasks with his well-known skill and tenacity.

I should also like to extend a warm welcome to the new Members of the Organization. Their presence here cannot but strengthen the universality of the United Nations, the goal of whose founding fathers was to bring together all peoples, put an end to the scourge of war and other forms of conflict, and above all to ensure socio-economic development and fraternity among men.

At the last session of the General Assembly my delegation set forth the changes that had taken place in Chadian politics. We announced the enactment of the law on the conditions for the creation and functioning of political parties in the framework of pluralistic democracy and on the holding of a national sovereign conference scheduled for May 1992. It goes without saying that a meeting of such crucial importance for the future of the country had to be most carefully and rigorously prepared if optimum results were to be achieved. Thus, it was not possible to convene the conference on the scheduled date because the commission in charge of preparations for it did not submit its conclusions in time.

Today I am in a position to announce from this rostrum that the Chad's national sovereign conference will take place during the first quarter of 1993, at the latest. This is a solemn commitment and one that has been repeatedly reaffirmed. Similarly, I reiterate here and now that the democratic process under way in my country is irreversible.

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

Looking forward to this important date, and with a desire to bring together the largest possible number of our fellow citizens in the daily management of the affairs of the State, President Idriss Déby decided, after long consultations, to modify the National Charter which has governed Chad since 4 March 1991. On this basis, Mr. Joseph Yodoyman, a member of the opposition, has been appointed Prime Minister and Head of Government. The new Government includes both representatives of the opposition parties and representatives of ordinary citizens. This forward-looking government has set for itself the objective of pursuing the orientation plan presented to the donors and sponsors of Chad in Geneva in June 1990. Stress has been laid on disengagement of the State, privatization, liberalization of the economy and sector-based development, with priority given to competence and experience in the administration and to maintaining a dialogue with our social partners.

Like many other countries on the continent, Chad is confronting an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. To deal with the crisis, the Government adopted a number of measures to stabilize public finances. These measures included: an increase in individual income taxes; a 50 per cent decrease in compensation given to all governmental and related workers; a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in indexed income; a 20 per cent reduction in lump-sum income; a 10 per cent reduction of the numbers working in public administration; and a reduction in State spending. These measures, which affect workers in both the public and the private sectors, encountered the vigorous opposition of the trade unions, leading to days of strikes in May, June, July and August 1992.

Although the strikes were conducted lawfully, the Government had no choice but to maintain these measures, the overriding necessity of which was repeatedly underscored in the face of limited national resources. To make it

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

possible for these measures to have effect, the Government is at the present time negotiating with social partners a social truce that will apply to the rest of the year.

The Chadian people, officials and agents of the public and private sectors have a moral obligation to endure these sacrifices if they are to be able to look forward to the future with greater hope and serenity. With a view to reducing expenditures and establishing balance, the Government is pursuing its programme of restructuring the army. In this respect a protocol agreement has been signed with France which should make it possible to reduce the army from 50,000 to 25,000 men and to integrate all forces into a truly national army. This means that the French Government is giving us technical and financial assistance in this tremendous undertaking.

In connection with this programme, my country has not lost sight of questions of security at the regional level, and we have taken part in subregional cooperative meetings in this regard. At the initiative of the 10 States members of Central Africa, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus on 6 December 1991 resolution 46/37 B entitled "Regional confidence-building measures". In keeping with this resolution, on 28 May 1992 the Secretary-General of the United Nations announced the creation of the Permanent Consultative Committee on Questions of Security in Central Africa. The Committee is charged with developing confidence-building measures, promoting the limitation of armaments and furthering development in the subregion of Africa. From 27-30 July 1992, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, the Committee held its organizational meeting at the ministerial level, with the assistance of the Office of Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs. In its final report on this meeting, the

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

Committee laid down, among other measures within the framework of peace-building, assistance for restructuring the army and providing new job training to military personnel. We place tremendous hopes in the results of this meeting and expect eventually to benefit from this assistance as we endeavour completely to reorganize our army.

During the most critical periods of its history Chad has always enjoyed the invaluable support of the international community, and the Chadian people and Government are particularly grateful for this. Today again we urge all our partners to help us to carry out our ongoing stabilization programmes, and to stimulate economic activity in the country. These programmes have been laid down in a political context that has not always been conducive to the process of democratization that had been begun. Indeed, there have been here and there pockets of resistance to change, leading to instances of rebellion that have been put down thanks to the Government's policy of reaching out and promoting dialogue. Several peace agreements have thus been signed with rebellious movements, with the support of friendly countries, which deserve our heartfelt gratitude.

Our joy at the ending of the cold war, which led to the beginning of a fruitful dialogue in the Security Council, is matched by our concern at a resurgence of certain problems such as injustice, ultranationalism, racism and religious fundamentalism, all of which are potential sources of conflict. The Chadian delegation would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his report, "An Agenda for Peace", which gives us valuable guidelines towards achieving a more secure, peaceful and just world.

But, as I said, there remain many sources of potential concern. In Europe, for example, an area that had been spared violent upheavals thus far,

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

we are now helplessly witnessing a situation that defies the conscience of the world. The breakup of the former Yugoslavia could have led to relationships other than those based on war, particularly since the birth of that country had been accompanied by much suffering. We denounce practices such as "ethnic cleansing", a notion we had thought definitively eradicated from the language of modern nations. Chad believes that, whether in the States that have emerged from the former Yugoslavia or elsewhere, our conduct should be guided by the hallowed principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of all other related instruments.

On the other hand, the Chadian delegation welcomes the evolution of the situation in Cambodia and expresses the hope that this most ambitious operation undertaken by the United Nations will be successfully concluded, as is so ardently desired by the international community and by the Cambodian people, who have suffered long enough.

Turning now to the situation in the Middle East and Palestine, my delegation observes that the process which began last year in Madrid has continued towards a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli crisis. The results of the Washington meetings, however, have fallen short of expectations. While we believe that a certain dynamism emerged, this will lead to success only if the relevant United Nations resolutions are taken into account in good faith thus showing a clear determination to restore peace and security in that part of the world.

Even if the end of the confrontation between the two blocs has led to certain bright spots in Africa, with the logic of peace at work in Angola and Mozambique, even if democratization has made considerable progress, peace and harmony are not yet at home in many parts of the continent.

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

For example, in South Africa, notwithstanding the positive initiatives of the minority Government, we must continue to condemn manoeuvres aimed at setting some peoples against others in an attempt to justify a system that belongs to another age. The international community must bring sustained pressure to bear to ensure that the vestiges of primitive racism will yield to a democratic, multiracial and egalitarian South African society.

My country also deplores the break-up of the Somalian nation as a result of the appetites of certain warlords there. It is high time that we put an end to this abominable carnage whose victims are always the same: women and children.

We strongly support the current initiatives of the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations, and we urge the heads of the Somali factions to sit down at the negotiating table and try to put an end to the terrible tragedy of the Somali people.

Liberia symbolizes the freedom of the black man. For the past two years it has been bogged down in a war that has taken a heavy toll in human lives and economic infrastructure. We appeal to the sense of responsibility of the primary leaders of that country and urge them to heed the voice of reason.

Civil war in the last decade of the twentieth century is a major challenge to the constantly expressed desire for peace and security. In the recent past Chad has experienced internal crises, so we are hardly in a position to preach to anyone. But we still believe that a sincere commitment to disarmament or rigorous control of the transfer of conventional weapons, which are flooding zones of tension or open conflict, is an absolute necessity.

My delegation welcomes the opening of the Register on Conventional Arms established by the Secretary-General. However, we have no illusions as long as

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

there are secret sales of weapons, which are a source of income for certain suppliers and a means of acquiring power for the many beneficiaries.

If today, with a degree of optimism, everybody could agree there is a real desire for change and progress in the world with regard to democracy and human rights, the economic situation in many developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia remains particularly disturbing notwithstanding some progress that has been made. The cold statistics of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the United Nations give us food for thought. The economic situation of the developing countries requires urgent solutions.

As was stressed by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,

> "The economic crisis that results from weakening investments and the slow growth of democratic institutions has threatened the national stability of these countries and their political future. Zones of poverty, which far from beginning absorbed are only spreading, are potential sources of violence and confrontation. The proof has already been given that these areas could flare up in ethnic, tribal or national conflicts. Therefore lasting development is an essential factor in the establishment of world peace and stability, which is undeniably in the mutual interest of all the members of the international community, whether developed or developing."

My delegation supports that analysis, and we urge the international community to implement without delay the various instruments that have been adopted thus far, in particular the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, more specifically the growth the development of the developing countries.

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

If there is one question that is of concern to all the members of the international community, it is the challenge of the environment. My country is located in a Sahelian area and daily witnesses the deterioration of its environment, so we attach special importance to this question at both the national and regional levels. However, the universality of the question means that it can be tackled only within the framework of international co-operation based on interdependence and solidarity. While we welcomed the Rio Conference on the Environment and Development, we still believe that its results will not put an end to the many and varied threats to the environment if real substance is not given to the concept of sustainable development.

Over the past few years human rights have played a preponderant role in the lives of nations. New concepts that are still vaguely defined have emerged. However, political pluralism alone will not solve all the problems of more than half of mankind. That is why we hope that at the 1993 Conference all questions concerning human rights will be tackled.

The United Nations is revived and refreshed as a result of the end of the era of confrontation between the super-Powers. The Organization has recorded astounding successes in such varied fields as decolonization and the maintenance of international peace and security thanks to the Blue Helmets who are scattered around the world, notwithstanding the difficulties that have been encountered in implementing the ideals of the Charter.

One such ideal is the need for solidarity among peoples, and that solidarity can be realized only if we take into account the elementary needs of those who are destitute. On the threshold of the twenty-first century, men must show that, having avoided a nuclear holocaust, they are now capable of building a universal peace through development.

Mr. MESFIN (Ethiopia): On behalf of the Ethiopian delegation and myself I wish to extend heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly1. My delegation is confident that, under your wise guidance, the current session of the General Assembly will achieve outstanding successes. In this connection I wish to assure Your Excellency of my delegation's full co-operation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

I also wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his able stewardship of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Likewise, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, for his vigorous efforts to fulfil the mandate bestowed upon him by the world community. We are confident that under his able leadership the stature and credibiility of the United Nations will be further enhanced. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

My delegation is also pleased to extend a cordial welcome to all the new Members of the United Nations which have joined our family during the last 12 months.

The end of the cold war, which was a great turning-point in history, was followed by further positive changes in the international political climate. However, it is a matter of concern to us that there are still conflicts raging in many parts of the world. The thaw in the relations between East and West did not necessarily lead to total peace, devoid of human suffering and hardship.

In this regard, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the unfolding tragedy in Somalia, which defies imagination and affronts our senses and sensibilities. Over the past two years, the situation in the country has deteriorated so much that the State has ceased to exist. Law and order, peace and stability and the basic infrastructure necessary for the life of a functioning society are virtually non-existent. These have all been destroyed by acts of internecine warfare, the extent of whose damage and the consequent human suffering combine to make Somalia one of the worst humanitarian crises in living memory.

It is lamentable that Somalia should be bleeding to death by the actions of its own sons. Nearly half the total population of the country has been dislocated by war and famine. Scores of children and old people are dying every day, while thousands have perished. The Somali people have left their homes and fled to neighbouring and other countries.

Given the situation in Somalia today, it is pertinent to ask why the various factions are doing all this to their own country and people. Why this

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

wanton destruction for the sake of political power over a disintegrating country? How can one explain what is being done to the people of Somalia, something which goes beyond any conceivable political cause or justification when we see women, children and the elderly being killed indiscriminately merely because they belong to this clan or that sub-clan?

This nightmare must come to an immediate end. The Ethiopian people can speak from their own history of 30 years of conflict: war and the application of brute force and senseless destruction cannot by any means provide the solution to a country's political problems. We believe that the bloodletting in Somalia during the past two years should serve as a sufficient lesson to the various factions that the path of conflict can only lead to more catastrophe. Historical knowledge confirms beyond a reasonable doubt that the use of force or war never achieved lasting results in the conduct of human affairs. It is our firm conviction that the protagonists in the current crisis in Somalia should make the welfare and interests of the country and the people they claim to represent uppermost in their minds.

It must be stated that Somalia's neighbours, the countries of the Horn of Africa, did not spare the slightest effort to bring about a peaceful resolution of the tragic conflict.

It will be recalled that a Horn of Africa summit meeting on humanitarian issues was convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April 1992. Its main objective was to examine the serious humanitarian crisis in the subregion and work with regional organizations and the United Nations in order to save lives and ultimately bring the warring factions together with a view to seeking a solution to the fratricidal conflict. At the end of the summit meeting, a Declaration, Framework of Cooperation and Programme of Action was issued. This

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

was followed by the Horn of Africa Conference on Humanitarian Issues, held to formulate modalities for the effective implementation of the summit Declaration. A resolution on the situation in Somalia was subsequently adopted which, inter alia, provided for a cease- fire among the warring factions, the holding of immediate peace talks leading to national reconciliation and lasting political settlement in the country, and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need. Most significantly, the summit meeting decided to establish a high-level Standing Committee of the Horn of Africa on Somalia to coordinate ongoing efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In fulfilment of its mandate, the Committee convened an all-party meeting on Somalia in Bahr-Dar, Ethiopia, in May 1992. At that meeting agreement was reached on the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance and on convening a national reconciliation conference. To follow up the implementation of these two agreements, the Chairman and other members of the Committee visited Somalia twice in May and August 1992 and held talks with leaders of various political organizations. The result of the mission has been generally satisfactory under the circumstances. The Committee is still actively seized of the crisis in Somalia in all its aspects.

The effort of the countries of the Horn of Africa is a practical manifestation of the principle that regional conflicts should, as far as possible, be resolved by the countries of the area concerned. Although the situation in Somalia has for some time been ignored and left on the sidelines, it is encouraging to note that the United Nations and donor Governments are giving it the necessary attention it so rightly deserves. The international effort to distribute humanitarian assistance to those in need should be further intensified as a matter of top priority.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

The efforts under way by the Governments of the Horn of Africa, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and others, to bring about lasting peace in Somalia should henceforth be pursued in a coordinated manner. We should all speak with one voice to the parties in the conflict. The message they should get should be one, and only one: that they cannot continue with their callous disregard for the interests and welfare of the people of Somalia; that the existence of Somalia as a nation should, first and foremost, be of paramount importance; that there is no way they can achieve their aims through war; and that they should be prepared to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

In this connection, it is sad to note that certain quarters are undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis by supplying weapons to the warring factions instead of relief assistance to the suffering people of Somalia, or dumping industrial toxic waste on Somali territory instead of providing medicine to take care of the sick and wounded, and plundering the livestock and marine resources of Somalia instead of providing critically needed humanitarian assistance. We call on these quarters to desist from attempts to polarize the region of the Horn of Africa and instead work with us in partnership in our efforts to restore lasting peace and stability in Somalia.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

I should like now to turn to another issue of concern to us. We have been following closely the positive developments in South Africa. However, we still have serious misgivings about the prospects for the peaceful transformation of that country, as the system of apartheid remains in place. We are deeply committed to the decisions and positions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of the United Nations - decisions and positions that have been emphasized repeatedly over the years - as well as to the principled stand of the democratic forces in South Africa to end the apartheid system once and for all and set in motion an irreversible process of change to a multiracial and democratic political order in that country.

The current efforts to create the conditions necessary for the success of peaceful negotiation should be encouraged. In this connection, the recent agreement between the African National Congress and the Government to resume negotiations is a positive development, as is the release of political prisoners. We look forward to the initiation of talks between all the democratic forces in South Africa and the Government, with a view to the establishment of an interim Government to supervise the process of preparing a constitutional order for a multiracial and democratic South Africa.

Likewise, we are gravely concerned about the tragic situation in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This crisis, which is fast getting out of control, is a serious threat to international peace and security. The continuing bloodshed should be brought to an end and a political solution acceptable to all parties should be found as soon as possible. In this respect, we hope that the conference currently being held in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations and the European Community will have concrete results.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

We are also following the current peace process in the Middle East. Despite the international community's repeated efforts to broker peace, the situation in the Middle East still hangs in the balance. Nevertheless, the prospects for peace in the area are better today than they have been for a long time. We are therefore hopeful that the question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Middle East problem, will eventually be resolved in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions so that a just, durable and comprehensive settlement for the region as a whole may be achieved.

We are gratified by the outcome of the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament with regard to chemical weapons. The draft treaty prohibiting the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of chemical weapons represents an important step in the global effort to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. We derive special satisfaction from the success of nearly 25 years of effort in the disarmament process and from Ethiopia's contribution as a member of the Conference on Disarmament. In view of current trends towards democracy and respect for human rights, there is a need for the disarmament negotiations to include conventional weapons. It should be emphasized that the "peace dividend" from disarmament efforts should be channelled into fighting the problems of poverty, disease and backwardness in developing countries.

It goes without saying that the opportunities created in the past few years to secure a more just and stable international order cannot bear fruit unless there is a parallel effort, deployed with increased vigour, to bring about positive change in international economic relations. In this regard, much more is expected from the United Nations. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio, Brazil, in the middle of this

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

year demonstrated the great importance that the international community attaches to the pressing issues of the environment and development.

Environmental protection and economic development bear on the future of mankind and affect every country. Therefore, our collective and individual strategic planning activities should be aimed at solving these two global problems, which call for effective international cooperation and mutual consultation. The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, as well as the two Conventions, the Convention on climate change and the Convention on biological diversity, lay a good foundation for enhanced international cooperation in this area. However, there has yet to be sufficient focus on the problems of environmental pollution and ecological degradation and desertification.

We should like to share certain fundamental thoughts about the promotion and strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions in the context of current international relations. Although democracy may have certain universal features, it is equally true that it has unique characteristics peculiar to a particular country's socio-political situation. In effect, there cannot be a standard prescription for building democracy applicable to all societies and situations. Realization of this fact should restrain any attempt to prescribe uniform modalities and processes for the establishment of democracy and democratic institutions in different countries.

It is incumbent upon those who claim to stand for democracy to help newly democratizing peoples in their effort to consolidate that process, rather than confine themselves to levelling criticism from the sidelines. If those forces that advocate the strengthening of democracy fail to extend a helping hand to us in our unrelenting struggle to democratize our country, and instead simply

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

watch from a distance, any weakening or failure of the process of democratization will be attributable, at least in part, to their lack of cooperation.

It goes without saying that democracy is unthinkable without peace and stability, both internal and inter-State. Thus support by the forces of democracy for internal democratization processes would be a significant step forward in the resolution of internal conflicts. Inter-State conflicts can be settled by democratizing inter-State relations and by scrupulously observing norms of international law for inter-State relations. Although the parties to an inter-State dispute are primarily responsible for the peaceful resolution of their problems, the United Nations and the international community can, and should, play a significant role in encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes. Sanctions could be applied as a last resort against a recalcitrant party violating basic norms of inter-State relations once all other attempts to resolve disputes had been fully exhausted.

It is evident that democracy cannot be nurtured and sustained to grow into a robust institution in countries characterized by economic deprivation and destitution. It is therefore imperative to democratize the international economic order with the same vigour as we are deploying to democratize the international political order, if we are to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

To this end, developing countries, as a whole, should be given assistance to extricate themselves from the quagmire of poverty and underdevelopment. Failure by the developed countries to do so would mean exacerbating international tension and conflict in a different form, thereby adversely affecting all our efforts towards lasting peace and socio-economic development. In order to forestall such an eventuality, the United Nations and the international community should go beyond paying lip-service to democracy and development and provide meaningful economic assistance to developing countries. Only then will we be able to say that international peace and development are guaranteed.

At this juncture, allow me to say a few words on developments in Ethiopia since the establishment of the Transitional Government just over a year ago.

The demise of the repressive military régime in May 1991, the assumption of power by democratic forces and the endorsement of the Transitional Charter have heralded a new chapter in the history of our country in which freedom, equal rights and self-determination of all peoples are the guiding principles of political, economic and social life.

During this short period, while striving to ensure durable peace and stability after 30 years of bloody civil war, we have been able to lay the groundwork for the creation of a new political order in a country where very little was known about democratic political and institutional machinery.

The Transitional Charter laid the basis for the establishment of a broad-based administration incorporating a wide spectrum of political views, regional interests and national aspirations. The Council of Representatives, which is the highest legislative authority, consists of dozens of political and social organizations. Morever, with a view to paving the way for the implementation of the right to self-determination of all peoples in Ethiopia

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

as enshrined in our Transitional Charter, we have taken the the first significant step by holding the first successful democratic, local and regional elections in the country's history in the presence of international observers. An administration aimed at the consolidation of peace, stability, democracy, reconstruction and development in the country is now firmly in place.

The protection of human rights is at the top of the agenda of the Transitional Government. For the first time, internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully guaranteed in Ethiopia. The Transitional Government is fully committed to upholding and protecting the rights of individuals and peoples based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To that end, we have initiated a process by which Ethiopia is to accede to the various international Covenants on human rights.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia was established under circumstances left by the country's former absolute dictatorship. It was a situation where government accountability and responsibility were unknown, democratic culture and institutions were non-existent and where the country's infrastructure was devastated by a long drawn-out war and recurrent drought and famine.

Although the absence of a pluralistic political culture and institutional machinery, as well as Ethiopia's only recent emergence from an extended period of intense civil war, has had a significant impact on democratization, in general the process of democratization, decentralization and devolution of power in Ethiopia is right on track. However, this does not mean that the transition from war to peace and from dictatorship to democracy is a smooth one. Indeed, we chose to go through a transition process with a view to

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

making it possible for us to lay down the necessary preconditions for a full-fledged democratic order. We have made significant progress in all these areas during the past year of the transitional period. As part of the continuing process of democratization, the Council of Representatives has issued a proclamation on the setting up of a Constitution Drafting Commission, which is about to embark upon its important task as soon as organizational matters are finalized.

The lesson we have drawn from the first year of the transitional period is that the establishment of democracy, dependable democratic institutions and democratic culture in a least developed country such as Ethiopia, with an economy devastated by war and natural calamities, is an extermely arduous undertaking. However committed one may be or however strenously one may strive to achieve this goal, the process is bound to be very slow and full of difficulties and complications. This is not a sign of despair but an acknowledgment of a concrete reality, which is a necessary first step to success in any undertaking.

Undaunted by the adverse internal situation at the outset, the Transitional Government took, and is taking bold and decisive steps to lay the groundwork for the socio-economic transformation and democratization of the country. Thus, building democratic institutions, carrying out major economic reforms, instituting human rights and fundamental freedoms previously unknown in Ethiopia, such as freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression without censorship, encouraging the formation of numerous political organizations which are now exercising democratic rights without any hindrance: these are only the most salient achievements of the Transitional Government in the brief period of one year. As a result, we can assert with

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

full confidence that a new democratic culture and new democratic institutions are taking shape in our country today.

The unity of Ethiopia is being guaranteed on the basis of the unswerving recognition and accommodation of diversity. Bold, and in many ways unique, steps are again being taken to resolve the country's internal problems. Although problems may persist, our internal experiment aimed at their solution is already paying dividends.

The Eritrean question has also been resolved by the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Eritrean people. A referendum will be held early next year in the presence of international observers, including the United Nations, to determine definitively the future status of Eritrea.

The decision to resolve the Eritrean question through a referendum has been subscribed to without reservation by both the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Provisional Government of Eritrea. They have also declared in no uncertain terms that they will accept the results of the referendum. In effect, the decision is ours, and ours alone, and belongs in no way to any external force. We are confident that once the people of Eritrea have freely decided their own future, no matter what the outcome of the referendum, the existing and fast-developing economic, trade and social relations between the two peoples based on mutual trust and benefit will be the trail-blazer for economic and social integration in the Horn of Africa subregion, which we hope will materialize in the not-too-distant future.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

As regards our economic situation, it has been repeatedly stated that Ethiopia's economic potential contrasts sharply with its socio-economic underdevelopment. In addition to drought, war and famine, the mismanagement of the national economy over the years by the former regime has militated against steady growth by the national economy. Under these rather difficult circumstances, the transitional Government of Ethiopia has embarked upon a comprehensive programme of new economic policy measures and institutional reform aimed at increasing the role of the private sector in the national economy, and is rationalizing the public enterprises by improving their management and generally allowing the promotion of market-economy principles and mechanisms.

It is imperative for us to exert the maximum effort to overcome the multifaceted problems facing the country today and revitalize our national economy. However, it is evident that such an undertaking calls for the availability of vast resources which cannot be mobilized at the national level alone. We therefore call on the international community to extend humanitarian as well as development assistance to supplement our domestic efforts to cope with the emergency situation. The positive response and good will demonstrated by various donor countries and international organizations over the past year in support of our economic recovery and reconstruction programme are encouraging. We are hopeful that that support will continue.

The changes under way in Ethiopia are having an impact on the country's external relations. Thus, for the first time in several decades, our relations with all our neighbours in the Horn of Africa are being strengthened on a qualitatively new level. Harmonious cooperation in all fields is fast developing in our subregion. Our relations with other countries are also developing on the some basis and are showing encouraging results.

(Mr. Mesfin, Ethiopia)

In this new experiment of nation-building, Ethiopia has from the outset enjoyed the good will of many countries. Some have also extended material assistance. We wish to express our deep gratitude to all who have helped us in one way or another. Nevertheless, we have, regrettably, to admit the fact that the assistance we have so far received, in particular material assistance, falls short of what is needed to make our effort at socio-economic development a success. We therefore call again upon all our friends to provide us with meaningful assistance at this crucial phase in our history.

In conclusion, I should also like to reiterate Ethiopia's readiness to participate in all endeavours aimed at enhancing the role of our Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security and in assisting the developing countries in their efforts to achieve a greater degree of economic development and self-reliance. I am hopeful that at the present session the Assembly will review and assess the world situation with a new perspective and take a bold approach in order to meet the imperatives of the time. We must encourage and promote the positive trends already evident in international relations, and at the same time guard against certain tendencies which patently carry within them the seed of new crises.

Mr. ABDURAZZAKOV (Uzbekistan) (interpretation from Russian): Let me most cordially join in congratulating the President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

For the first time, the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan is taking part in the work of the United Nations General Assembly as an independent State. It is an honour for us to express our sincere gratitude to all State Members of the United Nations for the support and cooperation they have given the young independent Republic of Uzbekistan.

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

We are very grateful to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his constant attention to our region. The decision to open at Tashkent an office representing the United Nations and a number of its specialized organizations is clear evidence of that attention. This approach arises from the main orientation of United Nations activities at the present time, which were formulated in concentrated form by the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

Recently the people of Uzbekistan solemnly marked the first anniversary of its independence. The fact that now we have begun building an independent State is the logical result of the constant and selfless struggle for independence waged over the centuries by our people and its best sons.

Achieving independence has never been easy anywhere in the world. For that reason our year of independence is only the beginning of a long process. We are laying the groundwork for an independent Uzbek State.

We have saved our language, religion, traditions, customs and moral principles from the danger of complete disappearance; we are fully reincarnating our national values. Our natural resources, together with the economic, scientific, technical and moral potential built up by the labour of previous generations, can serve as a guarantee for the social and economic development of independent Uzbekistan.

To turn this potential into a real force, our Republic, under the leadership of President Islam Karimov, is working out an appropriate system; it is looking for the best structure of governmental administration and for ways to develop the economy and to construct its foreign and domestic policies. Measures are being taken for the social protection of the population against the shocks that are inevitable in the transition to a market economy, to a society which is new to us.

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

In the process of building an independent State, we are utilizing the positive experience accumulated by other developed nations and based on openness and market relations. Of course, in so doing we are taking into consideration, first and foremost, the specific features and concrete circumstances of our country and the national and cultural traditions of the people who live there.

We seek to create a social and political structure under which the principles of human rights and freedom will be stricted observed. Our State policy is designed to protect the interests and rights of all peoples, irrespective of their nationalities, religion or beliefs, to preserve and develop their cultures, languages, national traditions and customs and to involve them actively in State and public life.

We have firmly rejected the domination of any one ideology or any one world view; in fact, we are establishing a multiparty system as an essential and logical element of genuine democracy.

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

At the same time, we are outlawing those forces and movements that attempt through blackmail, threats and violence to change the structure of the State, that endanger the territorial integrity and security of our Republic, that sow ethnic and religious dissension, that encroach on the constitutional system and the moral foundations of our people's life. We require the activities of all forces and movements to remain within the limits of the law.

In our economic policy, we reject the structure based on the command administration system, which is highly centralized and distributive. We completely reject ideology. Equal rights apply to all types of property.

Of course, there are difficulties being encountered in carrying out our political and economic programmes. This is something we all recognize.

Today our people is going through a difficult period of transition. This is due to the fact that for many years our republic was the victim of a policy of repression and diktat, resulting in a dependent economy and making our region a raw-materials appendage.

It is not easy to rescue our people from the consequences of the totalitarian hegemony of communist ideas. Certainly, a new and just society cannot be created in a day, or even in a year. We understand all this clearly.

The most important thing is that, on the basis of inter-ethnic accord and unity among our citizens, we have established a stable social and political situation in our country.

The peoples of our region, Central Asia - Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Kyrgyzes and Tajiks - are the children of common forefathers. We share the same land and water, the same religion, the same history and the same fate; we share the same cares, joys and anxieties. Historically, we have always been

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

naturally connected and interdependent. We created our common history through cooperation. Many of our internal problems are evolving; they could easily become inter-ethnic or international problems, affecting the interests of the peoples of our region. This is what is special about the general situation and the international position of Uzbekistan and of Central Asia as a whole.

At present the Government and the people of Uzbekistan are deeply concerned about the course of events in Tajikistan, which is on the brink of civil war. The serious international danger is that armed clashes between the opposing forces, which have claimed thousands of lives among the peaceful population, could easily spread to neighbouring Central Asian States.

In the Central Asian region, with its dense population of over 50 million, such an armed conflict could have unpredictable consequences. Should the conflict spread, the peoples of Central Asia could be involved in an endless fratricidal war, which could ultimately destroy the freedom and independence they have recently won. That is why the current situation is dangerous for us. We have every reason to be concerned.

In practice, the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, where there are hundreds of thousands of men under arms, remains open. The actions of extremists and fanatical armed groups incited by those who are playing on people's national and religious feelings could have unpredictable consequences.

Uzbekistan strongly opposes interference in the internal affairs of independent Tajikistan and is against stirring up the fire of war. Uzbekistan advocates preventing the spread of the armed conflict and finding a solution as quickly as possible by peaceful and civilized means.

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

Uzbekistan supports the appeal of the Government of Tajikistan to the United Nations to provide assistance in finding a solution to the grave crisis, which could become international in scope. Uzbekistan regards as decisive in the present circumstances the role of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Fully aware of the danger of the situation, and in a spirit of humanity, and, at the same time, of responsibility for the fate of our peoples, Uzbekistan has requested Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to examine the situation and inform the Security Council, and various United Nations committees and commissions, of our concern.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, in his letter addressed to Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, stressed that only timely and effective assistance by the international community can be decisive in supporting the process of democratization and the political and economic reforms under way in the new independent States of the region.

In proposing this initiative, Uzbekistan proceeds from the concept that the predominant idea of the new international order should be the prevention of aggression and conflicts and the establishment of democratic machinery for making such an order a reality. That concept was convincingly expounded as preventive diplomacy by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In our view the guarantee for such preventive action can be found in cooperation in the broad sense of the term.

(Mr. Abdurazzakov, Uzbekistan)

I think that what I have said is sufficient for an understanding of the need to create a United Nations Eastern Centre in our region with the aim of extending the principles of the world community and international norms to the central part of the Eurasian continent. I believe that Tashkent, as a historic centre of that region, with its rich past and its modern experience in peacemaking activities, would be fully worthy of the honour of serving as the seat of the Eastern Centre. That would provide the world community with reliable information on the processes of social development in the region, expedite the solution of its problems and make it a zone free of conflicts.

In our view, that is the main goal of the United Nations and the new world order.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.